

**SITUATION REPORT NO. 25**  
**INCIDENT NO. 97-015**  
**DATE: APRIL 19, 1997      TIME: 11:00 A.M.**

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer  
State Capitol  
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Spring flood statewide.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: To date, seven people have died as a result of problems created by the winter storm and flooding.
3. DAMAGES: Approximately 10,000 Grand Forks residents had fled about 3,000 homes by early April 19 as city officials called for a voluntary evacuation of the city and a mandatory evacuation of a 10-block area west of the Red River of the North. Earthen and sandbag dikes have been deteriorating, allowing flood waters through to riverside neighborhoods and the downtown area. Areas under a mandatory evacuation include Riverside Park, Central, Lincoln Park, the 2400 to 3100 blocks of Olson Drive, 3000-3400 blocks of Elmwood Drive, and 216 to 223 27th Avenue South. City officials are contemplating a mandatory evacuation of all Grand Forks east of Washington Street. Dikes lost during the night include the Belmont Dike. Latest reports indicate that houses in the 1500 block of Walnut and Chestnut Streets have been affected by flooding. Residents of the 118-bed Elmonte Living Center were evacuated early April 18. Access to Minnesota was lost early April 19 when officials closed the Kennedy Bridge.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has ceased levee construction in Grand Forks and has abandoned flood-fight operations.

The Red River at Grand Forks had reached 52.9 feet early April 19. If there are no additional breaches in levees, the National Weather Service expected the river to crest at 54 feet. The river at Grand Forks has surpassed its 100-year flood event with record flows of 145,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) on April 18, the U.S. Geological Survey has reported. Flows had decreased to 100,000 cfs April 19 as water spread out into Grand Forks. The velocity of water had doubled from April 17-18 through the river channel at Grand Forks, posing a threat for dikes already experiencing problems with breaches. Even though the flow through the city has decreased, the Red River at Grand Forks should remain near 54 feet. Keeping the river high are inflows from North Dakota tributaries and those from Minnesota, where flood of record levels have been exceeded. In addition to Grand Forks, all North Dakota stations are above flood stage, with flood of records levels surpassed in Wahpeton and Fargo.

The N.D. Highway Patrol and the N.D. Department of Transportation (N.D. DOT) have closed I-29 north of Grand Forks, where flood waters are crossing the interstate. Traffic is being rerouted to N.D. Highway 81 and then to N.D. Highway 17. N.D. Highway 81 in the Minto area has been reopened.

A N.D. DOT road report indicates that other road closures include: I-29, at Harwood, the northbound right lane south of Fargo at mile marker 55, and the southbound right lane north of Fargo at mile marker 80; N.D. Highway 2, at Columbia Road in Grand Forks; N.D. Highway 5 near the Minnesota bridge; N.D. Highway 11 at its junction with N.D. Highway 127 to the Minnesota line; N.D. Highway 13, the westbound lane near Wapeton; N.D. Highway 34, from Hazelton to Napoleon; N.D. Highway 18, from the South Dakota line to Junction 11; N.D. Highway 54, from I-29 to Oslo; N.D. Highway 66 at Drayton to the Red River and from the junction of U.S. Highway 281 to the junction of N.D. Highway 20; N.D. Highway 81, north of U.S. Highway 2 to Grand Forks; N.D. Highway 127 south of Wahpeton; and N.D. Highway 200 at the Red River Bridge in Halstad and east of Hurdsfield.

The Red River at Fargo continues near crest at 39.42 feet and was recorded at 18.84 feet at Wahpeton, receding only 0.12 feet at both locations during the past 24 hours. The river level at Halstad, MN, was at 40.60 feet and continues to rise above its 39-foot flood of record level. The river at Drayton was at 41.50 feet, rising 1.20 feet during the past 24 hours.

A revised forecast by the Weather Service calls for Devils Lake to reach 1,442 feet by July. Initial predictions called for the lake to reach 1,440.5 feet, just one-half foot under its 1830 record level. The new outlook was revised because of 2.5 to 3.5 inches of moisture that fell during the April 4-6 blizzard. The outlook is based on the assumption that normal precipitation and evaporation rates will take place through July. The lake elevation on April 18 was 1,438.5 feet.

#### 4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from the first report.

STATE: No change from the first report.

FEDERAL: No change from the first and second reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: Larry Isaak, Chancellor of North Dakota's University System, reported three shelters have been opened at universities in Mayville, Valley City and Devils Lake. Mayville State University has shelter available for 1,000 evacuees, University of North Dakota (UND) - Lake Region in Devils Lake has capacity for 1,000 people, and the Valley City State University can accommodate up to 1,400 people.

The American Red Cross has established a shelter at the Grand Forks National Guard Armory and the Grand Forks Air Force Base. Shelters also have been opened at Red River High School and Valley Middle School in Grand Forks. The Red Cross is mobilizing national mass care staff and is staffing a toll-free helpline, (800) 272-2684, or for the hearing-impaired, (800) 366-6888.

Evacuees have been reminded to take medications, pillows, blankets and other personal items. Because no pets are allowed at shelters, the Grand Forks Emergency Management Office has asked pet owners to contact the Humane Society or a private pet boarding facility.

The State and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) donations coordinators have developed a draft donations coordination plan for acceptance and distribution of donated cash, goods and services.

North Dakota State University and Moorhead State University have alternated closures to allow for students to help with sandbagging efforts in Fargo and Moorhead.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: Grand Forks city and county officials and flood fighters were conducting welfare checks on residents to ensure their safe evacuation. The city used buses to transport flood victims to designated shelters. As flood waters inundated the downtown area, the staff at the Grand Forks County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) successfully moved equipment and radio and communications systems to the UND's Plant Services Building. The Grand Forks mayor ordered that the sale of on- and off-sale alcohol has been suspended until further notice.

With only two weeks left in the semester, officials at UND Grand Forks have canceled classes for the remainder of the year. Students can either take the grade that they have earned thus far or receive an incomplete.

A FEMA truck carrying 1,500 cots and blankets was scheduled to arrive at the Grand Forks Air Force Base shelter early April 19.

With the city of Grand Forks' water system in danger of failing, the N.D. National Guard is sending five water purification units to provide bottled water for area residents.

A National Guard helicopter crew was transporting maintenance personnel early April 19 to the only station on air, KCNN in Grand Forks, to ensure its continued operations. The National Guard was also conducting a welfare check of two Walsh County farm families with whom officials have not had contact for a week.

As Red River flood waters inundate communities farther downstream, officials for Pembina and Walsh Counties are reviewing evacuation procedures. Forecasts call for the Red River to rise at least two feet above its flood record level in Pembina and Drayton. Emergency managers from Walsh and Pembina Counties, the State Water Commission and the N.D. Division of Emergency Management discussed evacuation plans during a conference call April 18. County officials will now hold town meetings to review those plans with residents.

The N.D. DOT has 50 trucks on site in Grand Forks and another 24 in Fargo to haul dirt for dike reinforcement efforts. The N.D. DOT has also mobilized contractors for 24 commercial trucks to haul dirt in Grand Forks and Fargo.

National Guard crews have begun removal of carcasses of animals that perished during the recent blizzard. State agriculture officials estimate that nearly 90,000 cattle died during the storm. Crews began efforts April 18 at Beaver Creek where approximately 150 cattle died

south of Napoleon. In other efforts, the National Guard forces have been utilizing engineering assets throughout the state to respond to problems created by flooding in eastern communities. As of April 18, 116 Air Guard and 435 Army Guard members were assisting with 34 missions, primarily in Cass and Grand Forks Counties. The National Guard is providing dozers, sandbagging machines, traffic control, pumps and levee inspection. Members were also assisting with flood fight efforts in McIntosh, Nelson, Pembina, Richland and Stutsman Counties.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has opened Recovery Centers in Fargo and Wahpeton. The Fargo office is staffed by seven loan officers and 11 loss verifiers. To date, 11 home and two business applications were accepted. Two SBA employees and two Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) workers are staffing the Wahpeton location. The SBA has 32 staff members in the state.

In response to a large influx of calls from farmers, the N.D. Department of Agriculture has extended hours this weekend for its Disaster Response Center. The toll-free number, (888) 227-8632, will be staffed from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on April 19 and April 20.

The North Dakota Civil Air Patrol on April 18 conducted a surveillance flight of flooded areas in the southeastern part of the state for the Weather Service. The Civil Air Patrol monitored flood levels around Grand Forks during a second flight.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: None at this time.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER: North Dakota residents with disaster-related damages can apply for individual assistance programs by contacting the National Teleregistration Center (NTC) at (800) 462-9029. The N.D. Department of Agriculture operates a Disaster Response Center for farmers coping with damages and losses caused by the disaster. The toll-free number is (888) 227-8632.

The Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports for the spring flood, Devils Lake flood and winter storm are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is: "<http://www.state.nd.us/dem>".

The N.D. State Water Commission posts flood-related information on its Internet home page. The address is "<http://water.swc.state.nd.us>". The N.D. Department of Agriculture also posts flood-related information on its home page. The address is: "<http://www.state.nd.us/agr/>". The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a "Water Control Home Page" at "<http://www.ncs-wc.usace.army.mil>". The U.S. Geological Survey's Internet home page address is: "<http://srv1dndbmk.cr.usgs.gov/public/>".

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Raymond J. Staiger, Acting State Director